Fall/Winter 2007 Issue
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Eco-Sense

AEHA/AASE

Allergy and Environmental Health Association – Ottawa Branch

Association allergies, santé et environment – Chapitre d'Ottawa

A Tribute to Our Donors

In this holiday season, it seems appropriate to pay tribute to our donors and sponsors who, in the spirit of giving, support the work of AEHA-Ottawa. Your donations provide hope to our members in so many ways.

"At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." - Albert Schweitzer

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Visit the Allergy and Environmental Health Association's website at **www.aeha.ca**

AEHA-Ottawa is a member of the GLOBAL RECOGNITION CAMPAIGN for Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and other Chemically Induced Illnesses, Diseases & Injury affecting civilians and military personnel.

Eco-Sense

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AEHA: Self-help, Education, Prevention

AEHA-Ottawa is one of the branches operating under The Human Ecology Foundation of Canada (HEF Canada). HEF Canada is a registered charity operated by volunteers, with branches in cities across Canada. Together we strive to promote awareness of environmental conditions that may be harmful to human health, and to bring individuals together for mutual support and education.

Our Thanks to the Contributors

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NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

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AEHA Welcomes:

- Suggestions for presenters and topics
- English articles for *Eco-Sense*
- Articles in French for *Eco-Sense*

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or visit our website at: **www.aeha.ca**

AEHA Hotline: 613-860-AEHA (613-860-2342)

AEHA - Ottawa

Join us!

Membership is $25/year and includes:

- access to informative meetings and workshops,
- AEHA Ottawa's *Eco-Sense* newsletter,
- access to the *Source Book*,
- access to organic meats and wild game (when available) at reasonable cost,
- speaking with one voice to obtain a pesticide bylaw,
- access to upcoming events,
- information about conferences, etc.
- opportunity to list items in our "buy, trade and sell" section in *Eco-Sense* and the AEHA website.

For those who do not have the financial means to pay for a membership, please call Linda Nolan-Leeming at 613-692-4840.

If joining after Sept. 1, membership fees are prorated to the following September, according to the month in which you join:

Sept - $25	Dec - $19	Mar - $13	June - $7
Oct - $23	Jan - $17	Apr - $11	July - $5
Nov - $21	Feb - $15	May - $9	Aug - $28*

**The August joining fee covers a 13-month period.*

Donations Welcome

As a non-profit organization, we welcome your donations to help us to carry out the important work of helping those with environmental sensitivities help themselves. There are a number of ways you can give:

- *general donations*
- *through the United Way (Donors can specify that their donations go to AEHA-Ottawa.)*
- *memorial donations made to AEHA-Ottawa in memory of a loved one*
- *a Christmas gift to a friend or relative of either a membership subscription or a donation to AEHA-Ottawa*

Cheques should be made out to AEHA-Ottawa and mailed to AEHA-Ottawa, Box 33023, Ottawa, ON K2C 3Y9. Our charitable number is: BN 3273-7099RR0001. For more information, email office@aeha.ca, or call the Hotline at 613-860-342.

If you want happiness for a lifetime, help somebody.

- from a Chinese proverb

Environmental Sensitivities – a Definition

Reprinted selection from "It's Time for Help in Quebec," Fall 2004 Eco-Sense *(a revision of an AEHA-Quebec article by Rohini Peris).*

Environmental sensitivities can occur when people become sensitive to substances or phenomena in their everyday environment at levels well below what would be considered to be acceptable to "normal" people. Sensitivity reactions can be triggered by [the toxic chemicals in] scented products, cleaning products, laundry detergents, paints, petrochemicals, cigarette smoke, pesticides, pets, plants, fuels, [and from] electromagnetic radiation, molds, and foods.

The effect of environmental sensitivities can be overwhelming. Productive people may suddenly or gradually become unable to tolerate offices, homes, schools, hospitals and public places. Employers, who may or may not be aware of the problem, may refuse to make the accommodation necessary to allow people affected to continue working in safety. Many people with sensitivities lose their jobs if they are not provided with the accommodations they need to work productively. Some become homeless. All too often, retirement savings are depleted and debts are incurred in an attempt to create safe living conditions and to fund the cost of treatment. Treatment of these problems can be expensive and difficult to obtain, and includes avoidance of offending agents. Some people with sensitivities do improve after many years if they are able to find a safe environment in which to live and work, and if they can obtain (and afford) treatments that are both tolerable and effective for them. Sadly, despite skills and education, some people with sensitivities end up on social assistance. Many become socially isolated as they are forced to retreat from places and activities they love, and for some, the devastation extends to losing spouses, family and friends who may not believe that they are ill.

This disability may be invisible, but it is real. Like others with disabilities, persons with sensitivities have special needs which include, but are not limited to: housing in a safe and tolerable environment so that their bodies can heal, well-tolerated, environmentally safe products available at a reasonable cost, consumer self-help groups, a support system, tolerable meeting places, publicly funded treatments, safe hospitals, schools and other public facilities, and accommodation in the workplace. Like all Canadians, we are entitled to freedom from discriminatory treatment, which includes the right to accessible workplaces, accommodation and public facilities. Notably, environmental sensitivities have been recognized as disabilities by the Canadian Human Rights Commission and many provincial human rights commissions.

Message from the President

BY LINDA NOLAN-LEEMING

Dear Members,

I would first of all like to extend the Season's Greetings to each and every one of you and to thank you for supporting AEHA with your membership. We remain strong through our members.

Another New Year is just around the corner and I can hardly believe that Mary and I are now heading into our fourth year with AEHA! I would like to thank her and our wonderful board of directors for giving their valuable time to this organization. I hope that we have helped each of you in some way, and I would welcome your ideas to improve the services. On that note, we are only as strong as our volunteers, so your personal contributions would be most welcome.

It is heartening to see an ever-increasing awareness of the connection between the environment and its impact on our health. There is a grass roots demand for societal change which is finally percolating through to various levels of government. We can now see tangible effects as Premier McGuinty is proposing a provincial pesticide ban in Ontario, and Nova Scotia is likely to follow his lead. What a wonderful gift for the people of these provinces! We now need to make sure the message is clearly heard at the national level. Steven Harper still doesn't seem to grasp the concept as he so clearly indicates in his steadfast refusal to support any meaningful climate change legislation. To make matters worse, he is blocking international efforts for greenhouse gas reduction policies.

On that note, a local ban will most likely be tabled ***very soon*** *and I am afraid that Mayor Larry O'Brien thinks much the same way as Harper. This will be the third attempt at a local ban and we need all of our members to be ready and willing to make your voices heard on this crucial Health issue.*

In closing, a big thank you to: Mary, Larry, Gord, Jenny, Louise, Cathy, Nancy, Jane, Carole, Matilda and all the others who have donated their time to this wonderful organization.

Have a Wonderful Holiday,

Linda

A Note from the Executive Director

AEHA-Ottawa continues to be a busy and dynamic organization. We are receiving more and more calls and e-mails asking for and exchanging information, and our other activities involving the membership and the greater community are many and varied.

We had good feedback on the September information sharing and support meeting. Members and visitors had lots to share about their successes (and some not-so-successful experiences) with various detoxification methods. Printed handouts from that meeting are available to members for $5 or are free by e-mail. (Just request "Detoxification handouts" by e-mail at office@aeha.ca or if you don't have e-mail, just send us your cheque and a mailing address.)

Many of those attending the November 1 seminar on Lymphatic Drainage by Judith Spence told me they found the information most interesting. We saw how the lymph glands (if working properly) "milk" the toxins out of the body in a PowerPoint presentation, and Judith gave us a demonstration of this gentle but effective lymphatic drainage technique on a volunteer. See our last issue for Judith's article on lymphatic drainage.

Our next seminar will be held in February, and our presenter will be Michelle Meyer, ND, (of the Rejuvenation Clinic), again on detoxification. Please see the events page for more information.

It's been a long hunt for a safer meeting location. We'll be coming full circle in February, to return to the McNabb Arena – but this time in the dance studio, which should be a safer room for us. Thank you, Linda, for your scouting efforts to help us land a safer location.

I'd like to take this end-of-year opportunity to thank the many gracious volunteers in AEHA. I can appreciate that it's not easy to try to consistently volunteer when your health is like the proverbial yo-yo. Here are some of the volunteers who keep the ship afloat. My apologies for any omissions.

- For those who have already renewed their membership, thank you very much for your support. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many members who sent donations and/or kind notes expressing their gratitude for AEHA services. Your words of support mean so much. I know that not all of our members can afford to donate because of the often impoverishing nature of this illness, but our donors are helping those that cannot, and are hopefully benefiting from the information themselves.

If you have not already renewed your membership, please consider that we need these dollars to continue to provide support and information to our members.

- Here is a big thank you to our Board members for their support and enthusiasm. I'd like to especially thank our President, Linda, for her constant support, friendship, and inspiration – and her amazing dedication and knack for making things happen!
- Thanks to Larry Clooney for organizing the meat freezer, managing the meat sales and paperwork, and picking up the meat from far-flung locations. Because of Larry's work, members can enjoy a variety of affordable meats for restrictive diets.
- Thanks also to Carla Mosso for acting as our contact to the Ministry of Natural Resources for our wild game meat.
- Lots of thanks go to Jane Wilson for her editing expertise and submissions to *Eco-Sense*. Thank you for your much-needed help with our newsletter, Jane.
- Many thanks to Carole Lebel for her support in coordinating the Hotline and taking calls. Welcome to Anne-Marie Poirier, who has offered to help with the Hotline and the phone tree. Thanks also to Joyce Gagnon for pinch-hitting for Carole during her vacation. These volunteers are helping to warm up our Hotline!
- Nancy Jennings has graciously offered to help us with the search for fundraising sources. Thank you so much, Nancy. We know there is great need in our membership and beyond. There is so much we want and need to do, so it's very important that we go after these dollars!
- Thanks to Cathy Sward and Gord McCallum for keeping the AEHA and HEF books and donation receipts in order and making sure we stay in the black!
- Thanks to Matilda Samuel for collating all the information in the new-member kits and mailing them – and for completing and mailing the renewal cards.
- Last but not least, thank you to our *Eco-Sense* advertisers for their support. Please check our advertisers out first when exploring services and products for the environmentally sensitive, and tell them AEHA sent you! Some of our advertisers offer AEHA member discounts – inquire with individual advertisers when making a purchase, and be sure to show them your AEHA membership card.

How you can help

- We could use some volunteers to form a small Seminars & Meetings Committee to plan, organize, and promote our seminars. And we need help with promotion, especially with the postering. (Thanks to those who did some of the legwork for the last seminar.) I've been gathering e-mail addresses for various organizations and practitioners offices, as well as for the media, but we could really use more help to coordinate the postering and make those personal contacts.
- We could use more volunteers for the phone tree. The phone tree is used to contact those members not on email about important events. Please contact the Hotline if you would like to help with the phone tree. A script is always provided.
- You can help by asking your doctors and health practitioners if they are interested in displaying our *Eco-Sense* newsletter, our *Source Book*, or our AEHA brochures in their offices. This is how we get many of our members and get the information out. We need to expand our horizons, and this is one way in which you can help AEHA grow. If they consent to display our information, I would be happy to send them the information. Just provide me with the contact information and the informational materials they would like to display at office@aeha.ca or through the Hotline.

The *Source Book* will be printed again soon with a few small updates. The *Source* Book, for those of you who don't know about it, is a resource book for the environmentally sensitive. To order a copy, a downloadable order form is available on our website (www.aeha.ca/resources.htm#source-book) or mail your request for a copy with $10 plus $2 for shipping and handling to AEHA-Ottawa, PO Box 33023, Ottawa, ON K2C 3Y9. For non-members, the cost is $12.

Another fundraiser walk is planned for May 2008 at Andrew Haydon Park. We will be obtaining a park permit and will seek out sponsors and donations. Those who participated in the May 2007 walk had a wonderful time. We invite you to join our Walk 2008. E-mail office@aeha.ca or call the Hotline at 613-860-2342 if you'd like to join in the fun and work of planning and organizing this event.

On Wednesday evening, December 5th, AEHA-Ottawa members met at The Table Vegetarian Restaurant on Wellington Street in Ottawa to enjoy the Annual AEHA-Ottawa Christmas/Holiday Get-together. Over 30 members, spouses and guests joined in this amiable social event and dinner. Several members stayed on until about 9:30, when restaurant staff started shutting off the lights – no doubt a good indicator of the event's success!

Have a wonderful holiday season, and I look forward to talking to you and working with you now and in the new year.

– Mary

Letters to the Editor

I found *Eco-Sense* to be well presented, with relevant and informative content—a professional document indeed. So congrats to you and everyone who had a hand in producing it. I look forward to the next issue.

Michele Farley

The Housing Connection encourages you to photocopy and post this ad at health food stores, doctors' offices, or anywhere in Canada where EI people are likely to see it.

Canada-wide Housing Connection: I am starting a Canada-wide service that will connect people who need EI-safe housing with people who can provide safe housing. Please call me if you have a house or room for rent, or if you would be willing to provide short-term housing for someone whose home is temporarily not safe (or if you would be willing to allow someone to camp temporarily on your property during an emergency). If you run a bed and breakfast or are a real estate agent, please tell me what accommodations you are willing to make for chemically-sensitive people. Please call if you are looking for a house or room either to rent long-term, or for a short-term place to stay during an emergency. Also, please call if you are looking for a roommate. I will attempt to connect people who have similar housing needs and live in the same general area. Calls from anywhere in Canada, Quebec, or the northern U.S.A. are welcome. Call Philip at 1-613-278-0463.

Réseau national de logement : Je travaille actuellement à établir un service national destiné à mettre en rapport les personnes souffrant de sensibilités environnementales qui ont besoin d'un logement sain avec les personnes susceptibles de fournir ce genre de logement. Veuillez communiquer avec moi si vous avez une maison ou une chambre à louer, ou si vous êtes disposé à fournir un logement à court terme à une personne dont le logement n'est actuellement pas sain (ou encore, si vous autoriseriez une personne à camper temporairement sur votre propriété en cas d'urgence). Si vous possédez un gîte du passant ou êtes agent immobilier, veuillez m'indiquer les mesures d'adaptation que vous êtes disposé à prendre à l'égard des personnes ayant des sensibilités environnementales. Veuillez également me téléphoner si vous cherchez une maison ou une chambre à louer à long-terme ou un logement où demeurer à court-terme en cas d'urgence, ou si vous cherchez un colocataire. Je tenterai de mettre en rapport les personnes ayant des besoins semblables qui vivent dans la même région. Nous encourageons les personnes de partout au Canada et du nord des États-Unis à nous appeler. Veuillez communiquer avec Philip au numéro de téléphone 1-613-278-0463.

Interview with Philip of the Canada-wide Housing Connection

In a phone interview with Philip, he responded to some of these frequently asked questions from callers about the Housing Connection.

What is the Canada-wide Housing Connection?

The Housing Connection is complementary to a lot of the large-scale housing projects for the environmentally ill which are underway, such as the AEHA Safe Housing Project. If and when these large-scale projects are ready to take in people, the Housing Connection will certainly add them to its list. However, the emphasis of the EI Canada-wide Housing Connection is on places that are available right now and on people who are looking for roommates or accommodations right now. Housing Connection doesn't build anything or investigate places. All it does is connect individuals who have compatible needs. For example, someone may have a place they are willing to rent but only to those who have similar allergies to their own.

If an owner of an apartment or house is looking for someone to rent a house, room, or apartment, Housing Connection can help them find someone with similar allergies or someone who isn't going to create health problems for the owner. By the same token, someone looking for a place is helped to find owners who have environmental illness or who are familiar with the illness and so respect the special needs of the tenant.

I find that many people with Environmental Illness/ Multiple Chemical Sensitivities (EI/MCS) are willing to move quite a distance for a good place because there are so few suitable housing options for them.

The Housing Connection is Canada-wide, and I think it is something the MCS community needs.

How much does it cost to use the EI Housing Connection?

The Housing Connection does not charge you anything for its services. The owners of the places where you might possibly stay may or may not charge for accommodations.

What info should people have handy before they call the Housing Connection?

A typical call to the Housing Connection is a simple procedure and only takes two or three minutes. In terms of what information you want to tell me, it is

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entirely up to you. I recommend that people decide in their own minds where they want to live before they call the Housing Connection. Many people will only be interested in a very limited geographical range. Others may be willing to move anywhere in their province or anywhere within several provinces. Some are only interested in rural areas; others are only interested in living in a city that has full services for people with medical challenges. It is a good idea to have a clear idea about how much money you are able to spend before you call the Housing Connection. If you are looking for a roommate, it's a good idea for you to give some serious thought to what type of roommate would or would not be compatible with you and your allergy needs. At first, we thought of having a form that people could fill out to describe their needs, but upon further reflection we realized that it is much better if each person describes their own needs in their own way.

What definition of EI does the Housing Connection follow?

The beauty of the way the Housing Connection is set up is that we don't need to have any definition at all. Each person can define their own medical needs their own way. In other words, each person can define their own particular version of EI and the Housing Connection will make every effort to connect people with others whose EI has taken a similar form.

How effective do you think the Housing Connection will be at helping people find compatible roommates, compatible landlords, and compatible living spaces?

Everything depends on how many people call the Housing Connection. I am hoping that over the next few months I will get many, many calls so that the Housing Connection can reach what you can call "critical mass". For example, right now, I only had one person call from the province of B.C. Obviously, I can't do anything for her right now. But it would be great if in a few months or maybe a year from now, every single person who called could instantly receive the names and numbers of five or ten or more people who have compatible needs. But all of that depends on more people calling the Housing Connection. I should make it clear that I mean compatible needs in the broadest possible sense. For example, a house or apartment owner may require that the person seeking accommodation will respect the owner's allergy problems. Compatible needs could mean a huge range of things, and the Housing Connection will try to accommodate everyone's needs. All people have to do is make an effort to describe to us exactly what their needs are.

If people call the Housing Connection, how much information can they find out about their potential new roommate or landlord?

It depends on how much people tell the Housing Connection in the first place. People are free to put as much or as little information in their profile as possible. However, everybody should realize that the ultimate responsibility for deciding whether you are compatible with a roommate or a landlord or a tenant is entirely up to each individual person. All that the Housing Connection does is connect one individual with another. Those individuals are then free to decide whether or not they can work together in a mutually beneficial way.

It's amazing how powerful this setup can be. There is a similar organization in the U.S. called the Healthy Housing Coalition, and this is all they did was connect one individual with another. You might think that such a simple strategy would not be very effective, yet you'd be amazed at how powerful such a simple arrangement can be. Again, I encourage everybody to do everything they can to get the word out about the Housing Connection, because how successful it is depends on having as many people and places as possible on the list.

What are my obligations if I take someone in?

I should make it very clear that if you offer your place to the Housing Connection, it is completely up to you whether or not you take in the people who call. There is absolutely no obligation to take a particular person. If someone wants to stay at your place and you don't feel they would be compatible, either because of incompatible allergies or for any other reason, you can simply say "No".

What might be some benefits of providing accommodations to an EI individual?

In many cases, it may even be a benefit for someone to take in another EI person. In addition to helping out someone with EI who may need either a short- or long-term place to stay, you may also be doing yourself a favour by sharing your space with someone who can do things that you find difficult. Often people with ES have complementary abilities – for example, one person may be able to drive but not be able to clean the house, while the other person might be okay to clean the house but unable to drive.

What can people do to help the Housing Connection be more effective?

Probably the main thing you can do is to help get the word out. The Housing Connection works entirely on the principle of connecting individual people with each other. For that to work, people have to know about the Housing Connection. Something every person can do is to photocopy the ad and put it up in their local health food store or doctor's office – or anywhere else you think chemically sensitive people may see the ad. People are also encouraged to add links on the internet to this interview or to the Housing Connection spot on the AEHA-Ottawa website. Even if you personally don't need the Housing Connection, it would be a very good deed that you could do. It would only take a few minutes of your time to photocopy the ad and put it up in a place where it might reach somebody who could be helped.

Another thing you can do – right now Housing Connection is receiving more calls from people looking for places than offering places, so people can consider what they have to offer in terms of housing. People may not realize it, but even offering to put someone up for one night or one weekend can be a real lifesaver for some people. It would be wonderful if we could get a Canada-wide network of places where individual EI sufferers could go for a weekend if their neighbour was spraying with pesticides, or their apartment was going to be painted, etc.

How do I contact the Housing Connection?

Simply call 1-613-278-0463 (long distance from Ottawa and Kingston). The Housing Connection is run entirely by volunteers, so you will almost certainly get the answering machine – please leave a message and your call will definitely be returned.

AEHA-Ottawa Safe Housing Project

To be added to the safe housing waiting list, please contact AEHA-Ottawa by e-mail or Canada Post (see AEHA contact info on page 2) with the following information:

- your name
- phone number
- Canada Post address
- e-mail address
- specify 1 b/r, 2 b/r, multi-family, single family, etc.
- price range (rental)
- Are you interested in purchasing?
- Are you in temporary/unsafe accommodations?
- Very briefly, outline other requirements.

To those on our Safe Housing waiting list who also applied for the Housing Registry, if you move, please be sure to let both the Ottawa Housing Registry know by Canada Post and AEHA-Ottawa by e-mail or the Hotline.

Update

We are still working hard with the consultant and builder to make this safe housing dream become a reality, but the wheels turn oh, so slowly. As reported earlier, we have found a suitable piece of land. We are anxious for this project move along too! The wait period could be as little as twelve months or up to two years.

In the meantime, if you have an immediate need for housing, please phone the Canada-wide Housing Connection at 1-613-278-0463 and leave a message. (See notice on page 6.)

AEHA-OTTAWA SOURCE BOOK

The ***AEHA-Ottawa Source Book*** – a guide to products and services for the environmentally sensitive – will be printed and available again soon (Members $10, Non-members $12).

To order your copy, contact office@aeha.ca or call our Hotline at 613-860-2342.

The mission of MCS America [and AEHA-Ottawa] is to gain respect and understanding for the many men, women, and children suffering with multiple chemical sensitivities (MCS), Toxic Injury (TI), and other related disabilities through brochures, printed materials, newsletters, support groups, public awareness campaigns, and lobbying for the full recognition of MCS in the medical and legal communities while promoting mutual respect between fellow human beings and encouraging all members of the MCS community to participate and create a world in which there is no threat of toxic injury.

Maggie Burston, H.D.: Remembering a Remarkable EI Pioneer

By Varda Burstyn

Maggie Burston, who died on June 5, 2007 at the age of 82, was a courageous, brilliant and determined pioneer in the struggle for the recognition and treatment of environmental hypersensitivity. She began her own descent into that illness in the late 1970s, and had her major crash into its acute phase in the fall of 1982. At that time she was living in Toronto, and her mainstream doctors had no idea what had happened to her. With serious and incessant bladder infections complicating the picture, some told her that she was crazy (chemical symptoms), or had not long to live (incurable infections). But live she did, and by the time she passed away in June of this year, she had not only achieved a level of sensitivity that was almost normal, but left behind a long trail of positive institutional changes and a host of grateful people whom she helped in her eventual role as homeopath and researcher on chronic disease.

Maggie was born Margaret Jenny Diamond in Manchester, England, in 1925. Exceptionally gifted both musically and intellectually, her family's poverty made it difficult for her to take advantage of the scholarships she won. However, World War II and Hitler's holocaust changed her orientation, and following that war she worked with German Jewish orphan children who had found their way to England. In 1946 she met a handsome and good-humoured Canadian soldier, her beloved Ben, who was convalescing from a war wound in Manchester, and they married. By November 1947, they had made their way to Palestine to help in the establishment of Israel. It was there that their first and second children were born.

In 1955 Maggie and Ben returned to Toronto for a visit to his family, and ended up staying seven years. Sadly, the eight years Maggie spent in Israel had left her with a body-burden of pesticides and chronic amoebic dysentery, conditions that, unbeknownst to her or anyone else at that time, weakened her more and more as she entered her thirties. After the birth of their third child at the age of 36, she, Ben and the kids moved back to Israel. In Tel Aviv, Maggie underwent an operation to repair a prolapsed uterus. Instead, due to severe iatrogenic error, she suffered a botched surgery and septicemia, which left a life-long legacy of pain and incessant bladder infections. Despite, or perhaps in compensation for, the loss of her health, when she came back to Canada again in 1963 Maggie decided to return to her beloved music. She once again studied, and, soon, taught piano; she also began to compose music and teach composition. Her work was performed in many venues, and she was hailed as a significant talent. True to her pioneer spirit, she helped to found the Canadian League of Women Composers at a time when the words "women" and "composer" simply didn't go together. She also became an environmental activist, helping to create the Council Organized to Protect the Environment (COPE), which was one of a number of organizations that arose in the late 1960s, forerunners to the much larger and more established environmental organizations working to save the planet today.

Throughout all this, the infections continued, and so did the result of the antibiotics given to her to kill the septicemia. Maggie developed severe candidiasis, and once again, was told by her doctors there was nothing they could do about it. After twenty years of struggle, even Maggie's remarkable constitution was not able to prevent the beginnings of a slide into what were then, to her, the completely mysterious symptoms of chemical hypersensitivity – symptoms that, in the 1970s, her Toronto doctors were at a loss to explain. Then, in late 1982, the big crash came – she stopped being able to eat anything, she lost tens of pounds, she passed out from bus fumes. In other words, she had fallen right into the nightmare of environmental illness. And of course, this only made her infections worse.

Maggie's illness was so severe, and her search for help so consuming of the energies she was able to muster, that she was forced to abandon her musical career, a lifelong sadness for her. Her efforts to understand what had happened and to restore her health took her all over North America. She went for extended sojourns to Dr. William Philpott's clinic in St. Petersburg, Florida, to Dr. William Crook's clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, to Dr. Alan Levin and a number of other practitioners in San Francisco, and for shorter visits to practitioners in Georgia, Michigan and New York. Through all of these trips, Ben was at her side for long periods of time, then at home earning the funds necessary to pay for the search. She was fond of saying, most sardonically, "You've got to be rich to be sick," which she would always follow with a lament for those whose poverty doomed them to a much worse fate. Ben was not

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rich, so these efforts took a great toll on family resources – a fate well known to all EI sufferers – and she considered herself blessed to have this support. Her children, Varda, Daniel and Jonathan, often joined her for some long portions of these trips. She regularly remarked, and when she began to write about her experiences she stressed, that without the support of family, people with a severe illness that mainstream medicine refused to acknowledge were at a tragic disadvantage. Equally, she felt that families who had to bear the burden of this support on their own were asked to give the impossible in turn.

Not surprisingly, then, by the mid 1980s Maggie was organizing again, this time largely by telephone and from her home, though when meetings with officials and supporters were necessary, she faced the chemical perils of the city without flinching (until she got home of course, and collapsed!). She was a driving force and founding member of the original CRIF (Candida Research and Information Foundation), and she was instrumental, with a group of other people she encountered largely around the practices of Drs. Krop and Korman, and through CRIF, in pushing for what became the first Ontario commission of inquiry into Environmental Illness. She also worked hard for, and was a member of, the original board that brought about the establishment of the assessment and referral facility at Women's College Hospital. Still, she never stopped excoriating the health system authorities for not establishing a treatment centre such as the one in Dallas, or, later, in Nova Scotia.

Maggie's environmental illness was complicated by her many surgeries and infections. However, Ben built her a safe house in Kleinberg, Ontario, where, with other supports and efforts over ten years, she was able eventually to leave most of her EI symptoms behind. She always stressed how important a safe house was, and believed it was the precondition to recovery. She did not have much personal success with clinical ecology as such, but she did find homeopathy very useful, and began to study it, eventually earning an honorary doctorate of homeopathy, of which she was very proud. She also believed that clean air, stress reduction and therapeutic diets were crucial to recovery.

In 1995, able once again to walk city streets safely and pleasurably, she and Ben moved back to Toronto, where they lived until her death. She began a small patient counseling service for people who found their way to her, and over the next ten years her skill and reputation grew. In 1999, Dr. Alvin Pettle, a Toronto gynecologist who established a holistic clinic (The Ruth Pettle Wellness Centre) invited Maggie to become a patient advisor in that practice, and this she did until less than a year before her death. She met and was able to help many women in dire need, often treating desperate people for virtually nothing. She found friendships with Dr. Pettle, Dr. Alex Mostovoy and Dr. Raisa Weisspapir, among other colleagues, especially sustaining and supportive. And she had a special place in her heart for Dr. Ciler Ataner, a gynaecologist-turned-naturopath.

Maggie's efforts to educate physicians, naturopathic doctors and many other health professionals about environmental and fungal illness and modalities of treatment also resulted in numerous conferences and seminars which she organized or contributed to over the last fifteen years of her life. She lived to see both sons and two grandchildren healthy and well established, a great joy; but her daughter succumbed to environmental illness in her fifties as well, a great sadness.

A pioneer in so many ways, a beautiful woman of incredible spirit and determination, with a tremendous sense of justice and joie de vivre, she will be remembered with love by her family and all those whose lives she touched and transformed.

In Deep Appreciation to the Family of Maggie Burston

Thank you to Varda Burstyn for this eloquent biography of her mother, Maggie Burston.

AEHA-Ottawa was the recipient of $3,000 in memorial donations from the family of Maggie Burston, which are designated for our safe housing project. We wish to express our profound appreciation for this most generous gift.

Gastronomie pour personnes polysensibles : Café Gaïa

Vous êtes sur le point de découvrir un secret bien gardé... le Café Gaïa, un restaurant végétarien situé à Gatineau (secteur Hull). Ce petit resto chaleureux est niché dans l'un des quartiers résidentiels de ce secteur au 47A, rue Montclair. Le café est en fait une coopérative dirigée par un groupe d'amis. Depuis que j'ai découvert ce resto il y a deux ans, il est devenu mon préféré. Chaque fois que j'y vais, je peux compter sur de délicieux repas biologiques regorgeant de légumes et un service des plus amicaux. Le menu est composé de mets à inspiration internationale ainsi que de sandwiches gastronomiques. On y trouve un bon nombre de choix sans gluten, mis à part les savoureux desserts sans blé (à force de le demander au personnel, j'espère qu'il « craquera » bientôt et ajoutera davantage de desserts sans gluten).

Sans conteste, mon plat préféré est l'assiette santé biologique, composée de légumes de saison, de tofu (auquel on peut renoncer), de riz brun et d'amandes, le tout relevé d'une alléchante sauce au gingembre et au sésame. La plupart des mets sont accompagnés de leur fameuse salade. Afin de répondre à la demande de clients qui comme moi sont devenus fanas de la vinaigrette, on peut se la procurer au resto même et dans plusieurs épiceries naturelles de Gatineau. Le café n'a pas de permis d'alcool, mais on y trouve une impressionnante sélection de jus, de café équitable et de tisanes.

Le Café Gaïa a depuis peu une deuxième adresse aux coins des rues Frontenac et Laval au centre-ville de Hull. Le nouvel emplacement est ouvert du lundi au vendredi pour dîner et souper, tandis que le resto original offre les mêmes repas du lundi au samedi. Il semblerait que la décision d'ouvrir le deuxième l'emplacement a été motivée par l'achalandage de l'heure du dîner. Je n'ai pas encore jeté de coup d'œil à la nouvelle adresse, mais on m'a dit que les clients qui préfèrent un décor plus chic s'y plairont sûrement.

– Anne B.

The Sensitive Diner: Café Gaïa

There is a well-kept secret in the Hull sector of Gatineau — a vegetarian restaurant called Café Gaïa. This cozy little restaurant is nestled in one of the sector's residential neighbourhoods at 47A Montclair Street. The café is a co-op run by a group of friends. It's been my favourite restaurant since I discovered it two years ago. Every time I go, I can count on delicious, organic vegetable-laden meals and friendly service. The menu is comprised of internationally inspired dishes and gourmet sandwiches. There are quite a few gluten-free choices, except when it comes to the amazing wheat-free desserts (but I'm wearing down the servers and I hope they'll give in and offer more gluten-free desserts soon).

My favourite dish is "l'assiette santé biologique" (healthy organic dish) which has seasonal vegetables, tofu (which can be omitted), brown rice, almonds, and a mouth-watering sesame ginger sauce. Most dishes are accompanied by the café's signature side salad. The salad dressing is so popular that you can purchase it at the restaurant or in many health food stores in Gatineau. The café does not have a liquor license, but is has a good selection of juices, fair trade coffees and teas.

Recently, Café Gaïa opened a second location in downtown Hull at the corner of Frontenac and Laval streets. This location is open Monday through Friday for lunch and dinner, while the original location is open Monday through Saturday for lunch and dinner. They opened the second location because they often had to turn away some of the lunchtime crowd. I have not yet checked out the new location, but I've been told that it will please the more decor-conscious patrons.

Alert re: ODSP

If you or someone you know is in receipt of ODSP, this is an important message!

I have been informed that anyone applying for a medical transportation allowance and who go to the pharmacy to get prescription medications and or medical supplies such as syringes must have **"Pharmacist"** written on the form and **not** pharmacy! The words pharmacy to pick up prescriptions will lead you to a denial of allowance.

Please also note that when adding new medical travel expenses and or new food restrictions to your form you need to include all the ones on the past form as well or you will just get the new one and will lose all others!

Also take note of the new location of the ODSP office in Ottawa. They are now located at 351 Preston Street on the second floor.

Hope this helps!

Catherine Gardner ♦

City launches Full Property Tax Deferral Program

Mayor Larry O'Brien and Councillor Peter Hume launched the City's new Full Property Tax Deferral Program for seniors and people with disabilities on low income.

"Ottawa is proud to be the first city in Ontario to allow low-income seniors and people with disabilities who own their home to defer property taxes," said Mayor Larry O'Brien. "We are now able to better serve the needs of our seniors and people with disabilities."

The new Full Property Tax Deferral Program was developed to help seniors and people with disabilities who own their homes and who have a total household income lower than $35,000 to defer their property taxes until ownership of the property changes or the applicant no longer meets eligibility criteria.

"In Ottawa, we are committed to meeting the needs of our growing seniors population and people with disabilities. Low-income seniors and persons with disabilities may enjoy a better quality of life because they can afford to stay in the own homes longer," said Councillor Hume.

To Report Adverse Reactions to Pesticides:

Pesticide Incident Reporting
http://www.pmra-arla.gc.ca/english/legis/aer-e.html

This information submitted by L'Association pour la santé environnementale les hypersensibilités et les allergies du Québec- AEHAQ / The Allergy and Environmental Health Association of Quebec - AEHAQ.

To Report Adverse Reactions to Cosmetics:

Cosmetic Products Ingredient Labelling
http://hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/prod/cosmet_prod_c.html

To report an adverse reaction to a **cosmetic product**, contact your nearest Regional Product Safety Office http://hc-sc.gc.ca/home-accueil/contact/hecs-dgsesc/pso-bsp_ncr-rcn_c.html

This information submitted by L'Association pour la santé environnementale les hypersensibilités et les allergies du Québec- AEHAQ / The Allergy and Environmental Health Association of Quebec - AEHAQ.

Chow QiGong

About two and a half years ago, I embarked on diagnosis and treatments for physical and neurological problems that included environmental and food sensitivities, and soon celiac disease was added to the list. I was at that time attending Tai Chi classes to improve my spinal flexibility for driving. The Tai Chi was working, but I switched to Qigong classes because I was looking for a martial art that would also improve my breathing, agility, and thinking, as well as my flexibility. "Chi" and "Qi" are pronounced the same; both mean energy, while "gong" means "working with, i.e., qigong consists of intentional physical movements and conscious breathing to improve the body, mind, and spirit.

There are many adaptations of qigong available; I chose Chow QiGong because Dr. Chow developed its four warm-up and eight main exercises specifically to help people to regain and improve their health. Some people "work out" while seated on a chair; for the rest of us all of the movements happen within the span of your arms, while standing. Everyone works at their own pace and level — no movements are strained — and newcomers are always welcome and given special introductory attention. After the physical exercises, I stay for a healing meditation guided by a recording of Dr. Chow, followed by a few minutes of Om chanting, if that's the word, which grounds the whole experience and leaves me feeling very centered.

I look forward to the weekly sessions at the McNabb Community Centre (Tuesdays at 9:15 a.m. and/or Wednesdays at 6 p.m.). The instructors are certified by Dr. Effie Chow. I've chosen an annual membership, but other people choose to pay a reasonable drop-in fee only when they attend. From time to time, the Ottawa Chapter organizes a weekend course presented by Dr Chow, or a 100-hour four-weekend course to train instructors. For me, practising Chow Qigong is the most beneficial physical/mental exercise that I get. I recommend its gentle effectiveness to anyone looking for a safe, health-enhancing activity in a small-group setting with people who understand and support their efforts towards regaining health.

– Don Peterson

Book Review: *The Sick House Survival Guide*

I have recently had the pleasure of reading a book which may be of great assistance to persons who are Electro Hyper Sensitive and persons who are Multiple Chemical Sensitive. The title of the book is *The Sick House Survival Guide*, written by Angela Hobbs. In 1996, Angela and her family moved into an area of homes in Newmarket,Ontario, where electrical usage was very high. She soon started to become ill. The first symptoms that she noticed were allergies caused by chemicals and building materials. Eventually, she realized electrical and electromagnetic pollution was causing her serious harm and may have initiated her allergies.

Her book describes how she discovered the different problems and how she found ways to help herself and ensure the safety of her family. The last part of the book is dedicated to assisting readers to find out how they can discover what things are making them sick and describes mitigation techniques to correct the problems.

The book may be particularly helpful for other people, such as relatives, friends, medical professionals and persons who find it difficult to understand EHS and MCS. The book gives a unique perspective of what it is like to suffer from these ailments and what can be accomplished when sensible solutions are used.

The book is available in libraries across Canada. It is in some bookstores and is available online at Angela's website www.sickhousesurvival.com and from the publisher at www/newsociety.com

– Martin Weatherall, WEEP Wireless Electrical and Electromagnetic Pollution

BOOK REVIEW: *Getting Hip: Recovery from a Total Hip Replacement*

She Unlimited Magazine review by
Veronica Marie Kettler

Getting Hip by Sigrid Macdonald is a delicate story of one woman, Sigrid Macdonald, and her beginning-to-end preparations on the road recovery from a total hip replacement. This book is a source of beneficial information for anyone who is searching for the facts about hip surgery. It can help to answer questions about total hip replacement, revisions, hip resurfacing, and preparations.

Getting Hip is an astounding book on hip replacements and how having one transformed one woman's life. If you need to have hip surgery, you can read this book to see how the author's life was transformed by a hip replacement. It is a disconcerting biographical story with hints of uncompromised choices, empathy, and compassion with an underlying candor to dowse the phobia.

There is an unbelievable diversity of women suffering from arthritic deterioration in need of a total hip replacement before the age of 50 – not something most of us as women expect.

Ms. Macdonald's book is reader-friendly while providing a fully detailed outline and journey to recovery, from consulting with the first surgeon to waiting for surgery.

Her story offers comic candor and understanding for those facing a possible hip replacement. It also offers useful tips that deal with not just the physical aspects but also the psychological tips for coping through hip surgery. Each individual Ms. MacDonald interviews has a unique situation that brought them to the final decision to have a hip replacement. The book is written so well that it leaves you with a sense of relief – and somehow the phobia subsides. Ms. Macdonald gives it that personal touch that many need in the face of making decisions dealing with our own bodies.

The book is a must-read for those in similar situations; the writing is done with compassion, significance, and humor.

NOTE: As a person with environmental sensitivities and member of AEHA-Ottawa, Sigrid provides an interesting perspective on what it's like to journey through major surgery and illness in our medical system. Sigrid is selling her book in the Ottawa area for $20 per copy and giving half the proceeds to the AEHA. To order a copy, contact office@aeha.ca or the Hotline at 613-860-2342.

EMFs – The Invisible Problem

EMFs are not visible. We can't hear them, smell them or detect them by touch – yet EMFs can create a major health problem for the environmentally sensitive. Without measuring instruments, or a knowledge of electrical physics, one is helpless – unless you listen to your body and try to identify the area of your home where you are reacting and try to eliminate or avoid the source.

High-voltage transmission lines are very visible, but when one of my colleagues at Canada's National Research Council went looking for power frequency EMFs with a laboratory gaussmeter, he routinely found a hundred times the fields inside modern office buildings as under power lines. Invisible.

When I helped to set up an information booth at a fair, there was a big sign announcing "Electrical Power Room" right behind the chosen site. The booth was moved, yet a sensitive person soon found that she couldn't stay to help. When I checked, I found that all the electrical equipment was in fact located behind the wall of the second site – the fields there were much higher than directly under the visible entrance door sign. Invisible.

I would like to clarify a point made in a previous issue of *Eco-Sense* about trying to eliminate EMFs by plugging a filter device into an electrical outlet. Such a device can indeed reduce high-frequency voltages in power delivered to an appliance plugged into it. In fact, they are routinely used for this purpose to protect sensitive devices such as computers. But, such a device cannot reduce the EMFs produced by the 60 Hz power itself. That can only be done by stopping all power to the appliance, i.e., turning it off. It also can do nothing for the EMFs produced by the wiring in the building, high or low frequency.

Of the various physical effects produced by power wiring (50-60 Hz), it seems that the major biological effects are caused by alternating magnetic fields. However, as we well know, minor effects can be major for some. EMF filters have helped some people who are so sensitive that the high frequency components of power are a problem. If they help you, use them. But, the rest of this note is about low frequency EMFs.

Magnetic fields are proportional to electrical current, not voltage. For the same power, high voltage wires carry low currents, whereas the low voltage wiring inside buildings carries large currents.

EMFs decline with distance from the source. High voltage wires are strung high up so nothing can touch them – long distance; wiring in office buildings is in the floors we stand on – small distance.

Magnetic fields are also proportional to the area enclosed by the current. A diesel-electric locomotive like the current O-Train produces small external fields because the current flow is completely contained within the locomotive itself. A catenary-electric locomotive, such as was planned for the streetcar-style O-train, produces large external fields because the wiring loop is typically 10 km long and 10 m high.

An electric iron produces small external fields because the current carrying wires are close to each other – small area. By contrast, a typical electric blanket loops a single heater wire across the entire blanket – a large area. And, an electric blanket is so close to us that our bodies are within the current loop itself, making the fields we encounter especially high. The same is true of most if not all heating pads and heated water beds.

Unfortunately, even the least expensive commercial EMF-measuring devices (gaussmeters) cost about $200, but there really is no other way to find out the truth about this pervasive problem. Except, of course, by trusting our bodies, which is what AEHA is all about.

– *John Sankey*

So what can you do to minimize your exposure to harmful electromagnetic fields? As John says above, learning to trust your body can help you to eliminate or minimize at least some of the problems. An article by Jane Wilson (Spring 2005 issue of *Eco-Sense*), listed these ways to minimize your exposure:

- Have your home evaluated for electromagnetic hotspots and eliminate them or try to stay away from them even if it means rearranging the bedroom.
- Replace your electric blanket with a down-filled comforter or turn it off (remove plug from outlet) when you get into bed.
- Replace your computer monitor with one that meets Swedish safety standards (MPR II standards).
- Use your electric razor and hair dryer sparingly, if at all.
- Move electric clocks and telephone answering machines so that they are at least 1.5 meters away from the bed.
- Move your bed away from walls with major appliances or wiring on the other side and away from measured hotspots.
- Sit at least an arm's length distance from your computer monitor; at least 1.5 meters from the back of another monitor, and at least 2 meters away from your television screen.

For more information on electromagnetic fields and testing services, please see our Source Book. ♦

Snow Go Program and Snow Go Assist

Pilot Program for Seniors and People with Disabilities

This winter, two new City of Ottawa programs will enhance the mobility of seniors and people with disabilities by providing snow and ice removal assistance. The Snow Go Program and Snow Go Assist Pilot Program are funded by the City of Ottawa and co-ordinated by the Senior Citizens Council in co-operation with 10 local community support agencies.

The Snow Go Program matches seniors and people with disabilities with individuals and contractors to clear snow and ice from private driveways and walkways. Snow Go Program snow removal workers have been screened by the community support agencies with a Police Record Check and for cost range. To be matched with a snow removal provider, contact a participating community support agency.

Eligible low-income seniors and people with disabilities may apply to receive financial assistance to pay for a portion of their snow and ice removal costs through the three-year Snow Go Assist Pilot Program. The Snow Go Assist Pilot Program provides a total of $60,000 per year in financial assistance to eligible low-income seniors and people with disabilities.

To be eligible for financial assistance through the Snow Go Assist Pilot Program, applicants must be a senior and/or a person with a disability, physically unable to clear snow and ice from their private driveway and/or walkway, and must lack the resources (people and/or financial) to arrange for the clearing snow and ice from their private driveway and/or walkway. Approved participants will be reimbursed for 50 percent of the cost of snow and ice clearing per event, up to a seasonal maximum of $250.

To apply to be matched up with snow removal help through the Snow Go Program or to apply for financial assistance through the Snow Go Assist Pilot Program, contact your local community support agency:

- Senior Citizens Council, 613-234-8044 (general inquiries only)
- Abbotsford House (Seniors Outreach Services), 613-230-5730
- Eastern Ottawa Community Resources Centre, 613-741-6025
- The Good Companions Seniors Centre, 613-236-0428
- Jewish Family Services, 613-722-2225
- Nepean Support Services, 613-829-1133
- Olde Forge Community Resource Centre, 613-829-9777
- Ottawa West Community Support, 613-728-6016
- Rideau Seniors Centre, 613-692-4697
- South-East Ottawa Centre for a Healthy Community, 613-737-5115, ext. 2418
- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre, 613-591-3686

For more information about the Snow Go Program matching service and the Snow Go Assist Pilot Program eligibility criteria and application process, contact a participating community support agency, visit the Services for Seniors section on ottawa.ca or call 3-1-1 (TTY: 613-580-2401).

Report on "Challenging Discrimination in Housing" Workshop

On Friday, November 9, I attended a fascinating one-day workshop on discrimination in housing. The organizer, Rob McDonald, was from Housing Help and was also one of the two speakers. The other speaker was Leilani from the Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA). Sigrid Macdonald and Catherine Gardner, members of AEHA, also attended part of the workshop. Thank you, Sigrid and Catherine, for your valuable input and good company!

Both speakers noted to the group that they have environmental sensitivities, so the points we raised were received with interest and empathy.

I talked with both Rob McDonald and Leilani after the workshop. I think they will be a good resource for our members. Leilani said she would come speak to our group, so I have just sent her an email to invite her to speak at our spring meeting.

Housing Help is a housing information, assistance and referral service located on Cooper Street in Ottawa. Their services include resolving housing problems, housing search, information for tenants and landlords, referrals and support. Drop-in hours are M-F 9:30 am-12 pm and 1 pm-4:30 pm. Their address is 309 Cooper Street, Suite 502, telephone 613-563-4532, fax 613-563-8019 and e-mail info@housinghelp.on.ca

The Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation (CERA) is a non-profit organization that promotes human rights in housing. It works to remove the barriers, such as discrimination, that keep disadvantaged individuals and families from accessing and retaining the housing they need. CERA provides human rights education and advocacy for tenants in Ontario. Intake workers receive calls daily from people facing discrimination in housing. CERA gives advice to callers, speaks with landlords to change discriminatory practices, and represents or assists

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individuals in filing a human rights complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission. CERA is the only organization in Canada specifically mandated to use human rights legislation to challenge discrimination in housing and to address housing insecurity and homelessness. It has offices in Toronto and Ottawa, and its services are free. Toronto: Suite 101A-340 College St, Toronto, ON M5T 3A9, 416-944-0087 (Human Rights Intake Line is ext. 22), or 1-800-263-1139 (Human Rights Intake Line: ext. 22). Fax: 416-944-1803. Ottawa: 200 Maclaren St, Ottawa, ON K2P 0L6. E-mail: cera@equalityrights.org. Web: www.equalityrights.org/cera.

We received some promising news at the workshop that the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) will be undergoing some major structural changes. Instead of complaints going first to the CHRC, now individuals can go directly to the Human Rights Tribunal. Previously, the CHRC screened out a lot of complaints before they made it to the tribunal stage. CHRC will now investigate repeated complaints about how the Tribunal handles a case. The CHRC will also establish secretariats for investigating anti-racial and **disability** issues. Lastly, a Human Rights Legal Support Centre will be established. This has been legislated and so must be established and resourced. The budget for this Human Rights Legal Support Centre is unknown, so it will remain to be seen whether or not the resources will be adequate.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, everyone is entitled to protection from discrimination with respect to housing in the private rental market, co-operative housing, social housing, and condominiums. Housing providers have a duty under the *Code* to accommodate a tenant's disability to the point of undue hardship. This means that rules or policies that have a negative effect on a person because of her disability may need to be changed. For more information on the duty to accommodate, see the Policy Guidelines put out by the Commission at www.ohrc.ca/english/publications/disability-policy.shtm.

If you have not used the services of Housing Help or CERA and you are having difficulties with accommodation in your rental unit, consider exploring them. Landlord-tenant relations can be difficult at times, especially when building conditions are causing environmental health issues. Housing Help and CERA may be two resources our members can call on to try to help make their accommodations safer.

- *Mary de Bassecourt*

Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health Smoke-free Update

At the November 8 meeting of the Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health (OCSH), we received a copy of the press release congratulating OC Transpo on its 100 percent smoke-free policy. As of November 1, smoking was prohibited everywhere on transit property, including vehicles, shelters, bus stops, platforms, stations and the Transitway. This is another big milestone of many for the OCSH in its progress towards achieving smoke-free air for everyone in Ottawa.

The next campaign for the OCSH is second-hand smoke in multi-unit dwellings.

A 2006 report by the U.S. Surgeon General, entitled *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco* Smoke (http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/) concluded that there is no risk-free level of exposure to second-hand smoke. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has designated second-hand smoke as a known human carcinogen (cancer-causing agent). Children who are exposed to second-hand smoke are at increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), acute respiratory infections ear problems, and asthma attacks. In adults, exposure to second-hand smoke causes coronary heart disease and lung cancer. Unfortunately, many residents resort to duct taping front doors, electrical plugs and heat vents in a futile attempt to block out the second-hand smoke that infiltrates their apartment from neighbouring units.

There is a growing demand for smoke-free housing across Canada. Globe General Agencies, Winnipeg's largest landlord, went smoke-free last fall. Sussex Realty in Vancouver is currently building Envy, a "green" condominium that will be 100 percent smoke-free.

Ontarians already enjoy smoke-free workplaces, restaurants, and public places. Many tenants want to live in a 100-percent smoke-free building too.

I have heard from many members about how second-hand smoke from other units is affecting their health. This is a very serious issue because we at AEHA know that your home should be an oasis, a place where you can heal. You will be hearing a lot more about this issue.

If you live in a multi-unit dwelling and are affected by second-smoke, I will be happy to forward your letter containing your story of how your health is affected by second-hand smoke to OCSH. (You can send your letter to me by e-mail or Canada Post or fax. My contact information appears below.) Please provide the following information in this order:

First Name:
Last Name:
Street Address:
Town/City:
Province:
Postal Code:
Home Phone:
E-Mail Address:
Your submission: (This is where your letter should appear describing how your health is affected. Please be brief!)

Send to:
Mary de Bassecourt
AEHA Representative to OCSH

Email: office@acha.ca
or
Fax: 1-866-887-1770 (toll free)
or
Canada Post:
AEHA-Ottawa
Box 33023
Ottawa, ON K2C 3Y9

Gluten Free Baking Tips from "Delicious Alternatives"

So many people these days need to avoid gluten in their diet. Gluten is the protein in flour which gives the dough elasticity and strength. Learning to bake gluten free can be a challenge but once you know which flours work well you will be able to adapt your own recipes and make new ones that will tempt and please your palate as well as your family and guests.

It's important to remember that when you are omitting gluten in your baking, your breads and cakes may not have the same look as when you were baking with wheat flour. Flours such as chickpea, arrowroot, tapioca, potato, brown rice, teff, quinoa, amaranth, millet, sorghum, coconut, chestnut and buckwheat all work well in place of wheat flour, so no need to think you are going to never have banana bread or a brownie again. A good trick that I use is a combination of chickpea flour and brown rice flour. I use 1/2 and 1/2 of each. Or I combine chickpea flour, brown rice flour, tapioca flour, arrowroot flour, and potato starch with some baking soda. This is in descending order, in other words, higher amounts of chickpea and brown rice flour than the others. This usually works well.

Finding these flours is a lot easier than you think. Many local health food stores or bulk stores now offer a variety of gluten free flours along with a wide selection of gluten free crackers, pasta, cereals and snack items. Rainbow Foods located at 1487 Richmond Rd has a great gluten free section available and if you have the time, ask to speak to Dorothy who is a wealth of information. The Natural Food Pantry which has a few locations in the city is another great health food store that features gluten free products. Try Lindberg's gluten free Rice Chips, they are really tasty and make a great lunch with a hummus or a homemade bean dip. The Bulk Barn is another store which is starting to feature gluten free flours and crackers and because you can purchase your flour in bulk you can buy only a small amount to try in your baking to see if you like the consistency or the taste. Loblaws Organics section is also featuring gluten free pastas, flours and cereals. Try Perky's Nutty Rice or Nutty Flax cereal as a breakfast cereal or in recipes.

Some recipes can even be adapted to omit the flour and by using a substitution of beans or lentils, a wonderfully moist and tasty brownie can be created. Another important tip if you are omitting eggs in your baking is to pay special attention to your liquid amounts. You may need to add some extra fluid to the recipe or you may want to consider using an egg substitute such as boiled flaxseed. Remember that in any baking recipe you can replace the milk requirements with equal amounts of nut milk, rice milk, soy milk or also with coconut milk which adds a lovely flavour to any baked good. Also, applesauce or apple butter is a wonderful low calorie and healthy oil replacement.

These are just a few tips that Delicious Alternatives uses when planning menus for people who need to avoid certain foods due to allergies, intolerances and other diet related illnesses like celiac disease, heart or kidney disease. At Delicious Alternatives, we consider not only the individual's dietary restrictions but also their food likes and dislikes, cooking ability, and most importantly their lifestyle. Tasty menus are planned for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks, with step by step recipes, shopping lists and helpful hints on where to buy ingredients. If you're stumped on what to eat, wish that you could somehow adapt that very special family recipe to your new dietary restrictions, looking for some creative recipes to zip up your strict diet requirements or simply want to incorporate some interesting new food into your holiday eating; Delicious Alternatives is here to help.

Shirley Plant
Menu Planner and Recipe Designer
Delicious Alternatives
613 715-1310
slaf@magma.ca

Montreal Doctor Exploring Link Between Football and ALS

Last Updated: Friday, November 23, 2007 | 8:25 AM ET

CBC Sports

A researcher in Montreal is exploring a possible link between the sport of football and the deadly Lou Gehrig's disease, or ALS.

Dr. Angela Genge, who runs an ALS Clinic in Montreal, has begun an epidemiological study that will attempt to reveal some answers.

Former CFL player Larry Uteck was a teammate of Tony Proudfoot during the 1970s. (Aaron Harris/Canadian Press)

Genge is examining athletes in different sports and why some, like former CFL all-star Tony Proudfoot, have been affected by the disease.

Proudfoot, a game analyst for the Montreal Alouettes, was diagnosed with ALS last May.

He has difficulty getting his words across and the muscles in his mouth have tightened because of the neurological disease.

The diagnosis almost devastated Proudfoot, but it encouraged him to do some research. He found that a former Alouettes teammate, Larry Uteck, died from ALS a few years ago, which he viewed a strange because the disease is estimated to affect only two people in every 100,000.

"What he's pointing to is exactly right," Genge told CBC Radio. "It may not be football. It may be something in particular with what these guys took as supplements during their training. It may have been other factors that we can't see yet."

Proudfoot also discovered a handful of other CFL players dealing with ALS.

"I don't think there's ever been more than 15,000 CFL football players in the history of the game and so that's a very high percentage. There could be something in the contact area [to] the head, or it could be something environmental, perhaps pesticides on the fields you play and practice on."

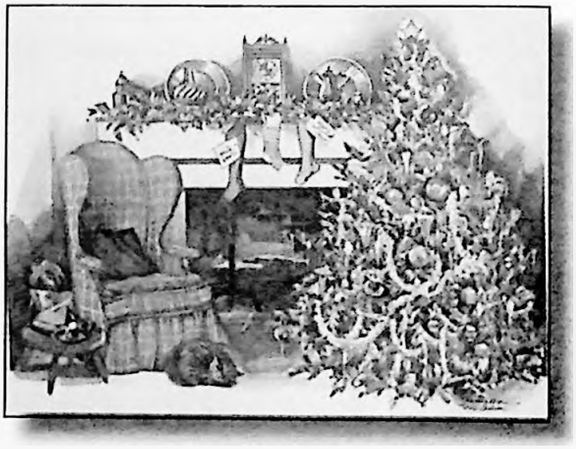
It's not the first time doctors have noticed what appears to be a high occurrence of ALS in certain groups.

Genge said ALS has affected veterans returning from the first Gulf War in Iraq.

There have also been some cases in the National Football League. And in Italy, researchers found the frequency among professional soccer players to be six times higher than the general population. ♦

CONSERVING OUR RESOURCES $

AEHA-Ottawa is trying to cut down on its mailings, for the sake of the environment, and to save time and money. We will continue to mail Eco-Sense because this is a benefit of membership and we know that not all members can use or own a computer. If you aren't already on our e-mail list and you have access to and are able to use a computer, please contact us at **office@aeha.ca** and request inclusion in our AEHA-Ottawa e-mail group.



SEASON'S GREETINGS

Expressive Arts

I have recently been studying to become an Expressive Arts practitioner and this winter I am offering a four-week program entitled "BRINGING LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS".

You are probably asking yourself . . . "What is 'Expressive Arts'?" The best way to explain this is to give you a few descriptions by practitioners in the field.

Dr. Brian Nichols, who developed the program at the Haliburton School of Fine Arts, explains it this way:

> The expressive arts have the power to transform the human being into what he or she was intended to become. Part of the fun of expressive arts is being involved in a community of explorers who dare to sing, move, paint and celebrate the soul....from the most authentic part of what it means to be human.

Wellarts, a program in the U.S. that uses expressive arts, has this to say:

> "The arts are a critical component of healthcare. The expressive arts is a tool to explore, develop and practice creativity as a means to wellness. Traumatic life experience affects one physically, emotionally, and psychologically. Participation in the arts allows individuals to draw upon their creative impulses to come to terms and live with these challenges. Creativity can be a catalyst in the healing process."

The goal of the process is to express emotions that perhaps we have not yet connected with and to connect with who we really are (i.e. more than the illness). No formal art training is necessary. In fact, this can be a hindrance since one could easily get caught up in "making good art" rather than connecting with our inner realm..

The work involves many different modalities such as: imagery, breathing, painting, drawing, sculpting, movement, sound, music, dance, play, poetry, textiles, and journaling.

A lot of the work is nonverbal to encourage the individual to stay in the body sensations and the feelings, rather than in the head, analyzing the experience.

The role of the practitioner is to provide a safe, non-judgmental environment which is rich in materials for creative expression and to support individuals in the creative process.

Although winter has its share of beauty, it also has a harshness to it. With the increase in darkness, many people face feelings of loneliness, depression and emptiness. Expressive Arts is one way to encounter this inner darkness and discover the light which is within us in a supportive environment.

Having suffered many years with CFS, FM, MCS, a big part of my own recovery has been using creative sources to get me through rough times, and to express that which I had no words to explain. When I was first diagnosed with CFS, the words that came out of my mouth were: "I know if I could create, I would heal" . . . and that was the beginning of my expressive arts experience. Since then, a whole new world has opened up to me. Up until that time, I did not have a clue that there was one bit of creativity in this soul. This, for me, has been one of the gifts of illness . . . ah, the paradox of life!

These illnesses can be very isolating. When I was going to the Environmental Clinic in Fall River, Nova Scotia, the physiotherapist said that she felt what was more stressful than the illness itself, was people's attitudes towards us. Let's reclaim our own power and create a fun-loving community where it is safe to express all the emotions: tears, laughter, anger, etc. We have so much to offer society because of our own unique experience!

I would like to provide the opportunity for a community where we can discover many new parts of ourselves that are just sitting inside waiting for us to discover the beauty of who we truly are . . . and most of all, just taking the time to play!

My intention is to begin the group mid-January and meet once a week for four 2-hour sessions.

To register, please contact me at (613) 231-2003.

Patricia Donnelly
Expressive Arts Practitioner ♦

How Do I Know Which Foods Are Genetically Engineered?

The True Food Shopping Guide lists foods that are – and are not – genetically engineered:
http://www.truefoodnow.org/shoppersguide/guide_printable.html#dressings

*This guide was compiled in 2003, and some brands may have changed since then. We are in the process of updating it. Help us keep the Shopping Guide up-to-date! E-mail us at info@truefoodnow.org and let us know what products you've found that are not on our list.

Submitted by Bonita Poulin, Canadian Coordinator
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www.mcs-global.org
More coordinators needed!

Announcements & Member classifieds

This section is devoted to announcements and free want ads/for sale items in support of AEHA members and pertaining to Environmental Sensitivities.

WANTED – URGENT: Reasonably safe accommodation for female with some sensitivities. Room accommodation with access to kitchen and laundry facilities in another woman's home is desired. Please contact office@aeha.ca or call 1-613-860-2342 (AEHA-Ottawa Hotline) and state that you are responding to this ad.

Looking for Healthy Housing: Apartment, rooms in a house or houseshare. I'm responsible, quiet, a good communicator and moderately chemically sensitive. Please call Heidi 819-351-1801, hcrea019@uottawa.ca

Foot Patches - AEHA-Ottawa Member Discount

(These are the footpatches discussed at the September meeting.)

AEHA members would get a package of 30 Accupeds detox footpatches for $59.99 (a much lower price than other foot patches available locally). He would like the people interested to call him and tell him that they are a member of AEHA. This is a very special price. Sometime in the future he will be raising the price. In order to have free shipping one MUST make an order over $79.00.

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Looking for ES-safe accommodations – or do you have safe accommodations to rent? Read about the **Canada-wide Housing Connection** on page 6!

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SEEKING EI-SAFE HOME IN OTTAWA AREA: Safe house for woman with serious environmental hypersensitivity and husband. Needed: excellent air quality, mold and VOC free, no dogs or smokers, other requirements to be discussed, up to $400,000. Gatineau area preferred but for the right property, flexibility in location possible. Please contact Varda Burstyn, vburstyn@sympatico.ca, 705-876-1909.

SEEKING HOME SCOUT: We are looking for a "environmental hypersensitivity aware" person who could, for an appropriate fee, help us scout a home, or possibly land to build, or possibly even an apartment in the Ottawa area. We live in Peterborough, and can come to see properties that have been vetted once, but we are too far away to screen properties as they come up, and too ill to screen multiple properties on an ongoing basis. Interested? Please contact Varda Burstyn, vburstyn@sympatico.ca, 705-876-1909.

Looking for an MCS-safe, Secluded 2-3 Bedroom Bungalow with laundry hook-ups, no neighbours, for under $1,000 a month incl., for 3-5 years. Almost anywhere north of 7 between Ottawa and Parry Sound. I have well-behaved cats and a med. dog. Linda Sepp 416-766-2862, urbanfengshui@hotmail.com

Responsible woman, **AEHA member, MCS, seeking occasional overnight accommodation**. Willing to pay small fee. Please contact AEHA Hotline at 613-860-2342 and tell them you're calling about Rhonda's ad.

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ADVERTISING RATES

Eco-Sense

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1/4 page - $40 ($95 for 3 issues)	Full page - $135 ($375 for 3 issues)

Please e-mail your ad in JPEG format to office@aeha.ca.

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2008 AEHA-Ottawa Meetings & Events

Thursday, February 21, 2008

Detoxifying & Rebuilding Body Function – A Holistic Approach

Speaker: Dr. Michelle Meyer, ND

Location: McNabb Arena in the Dance Studio, 180 Percy Street, Ottawa
Time: Sign-in 6:30 pm, Announcements 7 pm, Presentation 7:15-9 pm

Michelle Meyer will speak about nutritional, herbal and homeopathic therapies, as well as lifestyle approaches which can help us rebuild, rebalance and detoxify our bodies which in turn, can reduce our sensitivity to specific environmental irritants and foods. These lifestyle approaches include being aware of what mental and emotional state we are in when we are eating and going through our daily rhythms. Dr. Meyer will talk about our connection to our bodies in a holistic framework. The link between our emotional and mental state and our physical wellbeing will be discussed both in terms of our ability to remove toxins from our bodies and the extent to which we are able to rebuild our body function in order to more effectively process nutrients without producing excess amounts of toxic waste.

A holistic health consultant for over 20 years, Michelle Meyer has been practicing as a licensed Naturopathic Doctor in Ottawa since 2000. Botanical (herbal) medicine is an important naturopathic focus of Dr. Meyer's practice as well as the use of combination homeopathic remedies and nutritional supplementation, particularly the use of foods as medicine. Her practice includes a strong counselling orientation which uses a body-centered psychotherapy approach.

Naturopathic doctors (N.D.'s) are licensed, regulated health professionals in Ontario, trained in medical diagnosis and support for the body's inherent ability to heal itself. Dr. Meyer has received post graduate psychotherapy training and is certified as a Core Energetics body-centred psychotherapist. Dr. Meyer is also a certified colonic hydrotherapist.

Thursday, May 8, 2008 – Topic and times to be announced

Also in May 2008 – AEHA-Ottawa Fundraiser Walk

Volunteers are needed now to serve on the Walk Committee to plan and organize this event. Last year's mini-walk was very successful and fun! Please join us. Contact office@aeha.ca or the Hotline 613-860-2342.